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Oceans and the law of the sea: Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks

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Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks

The General Assembly,

Recalling the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea[1] ("the Convention"), including Part VII, section 2,

Recognizing that, in accordance with the Convention, the Agreement for the implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks[2] ("the Agreement") sets forth provisions concerning the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, including provisions on subregional and regional cooperation in enforcement, binding dispute settlement and the rights and obligations of States in authorizing the use of vessels flying their flags for fishing on the high seas,

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.V.10.
[2] *International Fisheries Instruments* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.V.11), sect. I; see also A/CONF.164/37.

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Recognizing also the duty provided in the Agreement and reiterated as a principle in the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas[3] ("the Compliance Agreement") and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations[4] for flag States to exercise effective control over fishing vessels flying their flag and vessels flying their flag which provide support to such vessels, and to ensure that the activities of such vessels do not undermine the effectiveness of conservation and management measures taken in accordance with international law and adopted at the national, subregional, regional or global levels,

Noting with satisfaction the imminent entry into force of the Agreement due to the fact that thirty States have ratified or acceded to it and noting also that the entry into force of the Agreement entails responsibilities for States parties and other important considerations as outlined in the Agreement,

Noting the obligation of all States, pursuant to the provisions of the Convention, to cooperate in the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks,

Conscious of the need to promote and facilitate international cooperation, in particular at the regional and subregional levels, in order to ensure the conservation, management and long-term sustainability of the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas, consistent with the present resolution, and deploring that the straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks in many parts of the world are overfished or subject to heavy and sparsely regulated fishing efforts, mainly as a result of, inter alia, unauthorized fishing, inadequate regulatory measures and excess fishing capacity,

Conscious also that the Agreement requires States and entities to pursue cooperation in relation to straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks either directly or through appropriate subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements, taking into account the specific characteristics of the subregion or region, to ensure the effective conservation, management and long-term sustainability of such stocks, and to establish such organizations or arrangements where none exist,

Recognizing the importance of the Agreement for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and the need for the regular consideration by the General Assembly and review by the parties to the Agreement pursuant to the provisions of the Agreement, once in force, of developments relating thereto,

Welcoming the conclusion of negotiations, and the commencement of preparatory work, to establish new regional instruments, arrangements and organizations in several heretofore unmanaged fisheries, and noting the role of the Convention and the Agreement in the elaboration of these instruments, arrangements and organizations,

Welcoming also the fact that a growing number of States and other entities, as well as regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and

[3] Ibid., sect. II.
[4] Ibid., sect. III.

arrangements, have enacted legislation, established regulations, adopted conventions or taken other measures as steps towards implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, even before its entry into force,

Taking into account that, in accordance with the Convention, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Agreement, States fishing for straddling fish stocks or highly migratory fish stocks on the high seas and relevant coastal States shall give effect to their duty to cooperate by becoming members of the subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or participants in arrangements of such nature, or by agreeing to apply the conservation and management measures established by such organizations or arrangements, and that States having a real interest in the fisheries concerned may become members of such organizations or participants in such arrangements,

Recognizing the obligation of States to cooperate, either directly or through subregional, regional or global organizations, to enhance the ability of developing States, in particular the least developed among them and small island developing States, to conserve and manage straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and to develop their own fisheries for such stocks,

Recognizing also the importance of the Compliance Agreement, which builds upon the legal framework established by the Convention, and noting that while twenty-two States have accepted it, the Compliance Agreement has not yet entered into force,

Concerned that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including that noted in the report of the Secretary-General,[5] threatens the serious depletion of populations of certain fish species, and in that regard urging States and entities to collaborate in efforts to address these types of fishing activities,

Welcoming the adoption by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations of an International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, which focuses on the primary responsibility of the flag State and the use of all available jurisdiction in accordance with international law, including port State measures, coastal State measures, market-related measures and measures to ensure that nationals do not support or engage in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,

Noting that the objective of the International Plan of Action is to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by providing all States with comprehensive, effective and transparent measures by which to act, including through appropriate regional fisheries management organizations established in accordance with international law,

Recalling that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1999 adopted international plans of action for the management of fishing capacity, for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries and for the conservation and management of sharks,

Noting the importance of the wide application of the precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, in accordance with the Agreement,

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[5] A/56/58/Add.1, para. 61.

Noting also the importance of implementing the principles elaborated in article 5 of the Agreement, including ecosystem considerations, in the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks,

Noting further the Reykjavik Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem, adopted on 4 October 2001,[6]

Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on recent developments and current status of the Agreement,[7]

1. *Calls upon* all States and other entities referred to in article 1, paragraph 2 (b), of the Agreement that have not done so to ratify or accede to it and to consider applying it provisionally;

2. *Calls upon* all States that have not done so, in order to achieve the goal of universal participation, to become parties to the Convention, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, taking into account the relationship between the Convention and the Agreement;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the entry into force and effective implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, including those provisions relating to bilateral, regional and subregional cooperation in enforcement, and urges continued efforts in this regard;

4. *Urges* all States and other entities referred to in the Agreement to pursue cooperation in relation to straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, either directly or through appropriate subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements, to ensure the effective conservation, management and long-term sustainability of such stocks, to agree upon measures necessary to coordinate and, where there are no subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements in respect of particular straddling or highly migratory fish stocks, to cooperate to establish such organizations or enter into other appropriate arrangements;

5. *Welcomes* the initiation of negotiations to establish regional and subregional fisheries management organizations or arrangements in several fisheries, and urges participants in those negotiations to apply provisions of the Convention and the Agreement to their work;

6 *Anticipates* the entry into force of the Agreement, and requests the Secretary-General, once the Agreement enters into force, to consult with States that have either ratified or acceded to the Agreement, for the purposes and objectives of, inter alia, considering the regional, subregional and global implementation of the Agreement; making any appropriate recommendation to the General Assembly on the scope and content of the annual report of the Secretary-General relating to the Agreement; and preparing for the Review Conference to be convened by the Secretary-General pursuant to article 36 of the Agreement;

7. *Calls upon* States to provide assistance to developing States as outlined in the Agreement, notes the importance of participation by representatives of developing States in forums in which fisheries issues are discussed and, once the Agreement enters into force, agrees to review the implementation of the provisions

[6] E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/3, annex.

[7] A/56/357.

calling for assistance to developing countries and to facilitate the establishment of a programme of assistance within the Agreement;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his next report on the status and implementation of the Agreement a background study on the provisions of Part VII of the Agreement concerning requirements of developing States, taking into account existing arrangements and assistance to developing countries that may be relevant under the Agreement, as well as suggesting possible forms of assistance;

9. *Invites* States and international financial institutions and organizations of the United Nations system to provide assistance according to Part VII of the Agreement, including, inter alia, if appropriate, the development of special financial mechanisms or instruments to assist developing States, in particular the least developed among them and small island developing States, to enable them to develop their national capacity to exploit fishery resources, including, inter alia, developing their domestically flagged fishing fleet, value-added processing and expansion of their economic base in the fishing industry, consistent with the duty to ensure the proper conservation and management of those fisheries resources;

10. *Calls upon* all States and other entities referred to in article X, paragraph 1, of the Compliance Agreement[3] that have not done so to accept that instrument and afterwards effectively implement it;

11. *Calls upon* all States to ensure that their vessels comply with the conservation and management measures in accordance with the Agreement that have been adopted by subregional and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements;

12. *Calls upon* States not to permit vessels flying their flag to engage in fishing on the high seas without having effective control over their activities and to take specific measures, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, the Agreement and the Compliance Agreement, to control fishing operations by vessels flying their flag;

13. *Takes note* of the outcome of the first meeting of the Joint Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Maritime Organization, held in Rome in October 2000, which contained a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing flag State and port State control over fishing vessels, with a view to eliminating the roots of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;

14. *Calls upon* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and its members, in cooperation with States and entities, with regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements and other competent international organizations, such as the International Maritime Organization, to address possible key issues constituting effective fishery-related flag State control of a fishing vessel;

15. *Urges* States, as a matter of priority, to coordinate their activities and cooperate directly and, as appropriate, through relevant regional fisheries management organizations, in the implementation of the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing recently adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to develop national plans of action on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and

management of fishing capacity, to promote information-sharing, to encourage the full participation of all stakeholders, and in all efforts to coordinate all the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations with other international organizations, including the International Maritime Organization;

16. *Encourages* States and other entities to integrate in an appropriate manner, including through subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements to which they are party or in which they are participants, the requirements for the protection of the environment, in particular those resulting from multilateral environmental agreements, in the management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks;

17. *Encourages* States to give effect to the principles elaborated in article 5 of the Agreement, including ecosystem considerations, in the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, and to incorporate those principles in fisheries management at the national level and in subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements to which they are party or in which they are participants, or as appropriate at the global level;

18. *Urges* all States to apply the precautionary approach widely to the conservation, management and exploitation of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, and calls upon States parties to the Agreement to fully implement the provisions of article 6 of the Agreement as a matter of priority;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the status and implementation of the Agreement, and on the impact of the entry into force of the Agreement on related or proposed instruments and programmes throughout the United Nations system relating to straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, taking into account information provided by States, relevant specialized agencies, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other appropriate organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations and arrangements for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, as well as other relevant intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations, and including further developments relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and other aspects of the present resolution;

20. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session, under the item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea", the sub-item entitled "Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks".